Washington Merry-Go-Round

F Post 9/4/74

By JACK ANDERSON

NEWARK — We have found ourselves sucked into the bizarre case of a mob-connected Irish-American hoodlum who has wrapped himself in the radical rhetoric of the Symbionese Liberation Army.

It's a tale of alleged murder, drug smuggling and flight; of how a young man is drawn into the underworld, and how the FBI flushed him out and was "bugged" in the process.

It began when 36-year-old John Tully called our office and told us he was tired of running. He wanted to turn himself in under our protection. Tully read to us from his wanted poster and told of his flight to Venezuela in 1971 to avoid a multiple mob murder charge.

In a gruff, tough-guy voice, Tully claimed he was a member of the "Peoples Liberation Army" and was dedicating the rest of his life to fighting "the vilest of vile monsters, the United States."

After checking Tully out, we decided to help arrange a peaceful surrender. But when our associates Jack Cloherty and Ed Tropeano arrived at Tully's Newark apartment early the next morning, they discovered that the FBI had been there a few hours earlier.

Tully's wife Hilda, however, had taped the 1 a.m. confrontation between the feds and her husband.

"I am a man of God," the accused murderer shouted at the agents on the other side of the door. "The only weapons I have are two Bibles."

"Then you better start praying," came the FBI retort.

Tully told them he was standing naked, so they could not shoot him down for carrying a concealed weapon.

"You will not intimidate me," Tully yelled. "I want to be served an arrest warrant, or I won't open that door. I won't be taken by an enemy of the people."

"We're the champions of the people," the FBI man bawled.

"You are not, you're the enemy of the people. I am a champion of the people," Tully responded.

"We are the champions of the people," the FBI man argued, standing outside the door.

"You'll have to bang the door down if you want me," Tully screamed.

The words were hardly out of his mouth when a loud thud crackled over the tape. The FBI was in. Mrs. Tully told us that seven agents, carrying shotguns and wearing bullet-proof vests burst in on her naked husband.

They searched the small apartment, but did not take the tape recording.

Driving to the arraignment, Mrs. Tully told us her husband's story.

"Drinking and fighting were his problems," she said. A striking Spanish woman who is deeply religious, Hilda Tully said her husband met his gangland friends in the state prison. Like many criminals, John Tully was a small-time tough until he fell in with already hardened criminals at the state correctional institution. Tully then became associated with New Jersey's notorious Campisi brothers.

Now, he is under indictment for four murders, cocaine smuggling and furthering a criminal conspiracy. Tully had asked us to arrange for his peaceful surrender to the United Nations or to a foreign embassy.

Using the slogans of the radical left, Tully said he should be turned over to a political body, since he was a "political prisoner."

But we were seeking to convince him that he would be better served if he agreed to return to Washington and turn himself over to the Justice Dept.

Tully's half-baked "political" arguments did not convince the U.S. magistrate either. Bail was set at $1.3 million and now this strange combination of gangland thug and radical is awaiting trial in New York.

BELEAGURED BOSS: With Chicago Mayor Richard Daley ailing, the last of the big-city bosses is Meade Esposito, the tough, talented Democratic chief of Brooklyn. Now, however, we have learned the New York State special prosecutor's office is looking into Esposito.

Already, two Esposito-backed congressmen, three judges and two of his top aides have been indicted. One of the congressmen, Rep. Frank Brasco, D-N.Y., was recently convicted in a gangland case.

Ironially, Brasco was Esposito's boss in the late '60s when the Brooklyn boss worked briefly on Brasco's House staff. More recently, Esposito's nephew and his granddaughter have been on Brasco's congressional payroll.

WASHINGTON WHIRL: The Secret Service is putting together a visual training film for local and state law enforcement men on how to protect candidates, foreign dignitaries and others from assassination or other terrorist assaults. They've been digging in old network film files to study examples. The purpose: to give the famous from President Ford on down the most protection possible as they "press the flesh" in the traditional American way.

Hamilton Fish Sr., father of the House Judiciary Committee member who voted to impeach Richard Nixon, has joined with Dr. Ivan Docheff, in a newspaper campaign to keep Nixon out of jail. What the ads do not say is that Docheff, who claims he speaks for millions of East European exiles, was former leader of the World War II Bulgarian National Legion, identified to us by moderate Bulgarian exiles as "Fascist."